



Security Council

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Letter dated 21 October 2010 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to write to you in your capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of October 2010 and attach herewith a press release dated 18 October 2010 on the thirteenth round of Geneva discussions on security and stability in Transcaucasia and a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation dated 19 October 2010 on the withdrawal of the Russian border post from Perevi village on the border between Georgia and the Republic of South Ossetia (see annexes).

I would like to request your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vitaly **Churkin**



Annex I to the letter dated 21 October 2010 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Press release

Thirteenth round of Geneva discussions on security and stability in Transcaucasia

18 October 2010

On 14 October, Geneva hosted the thirteenth meeting of international discussions on security and stability in Transcaucasia. It was attended by delegations of the Republic of Abkhazia, Georgia, the Russian Federation, the United States, and the Republic of South Ossetia, and by European Union, United Nations and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe representatives. Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs State Secretary Grigory Karasin headed the Russian delegation.

The security group held an exchange of views on the current situation on the borders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with Georgia. It was stated that the situation is changing for the better, is more stable and predictable. The nature of cross-border incidents has also changed — there are almost no casualties and large-scale firefights. This is largely due to an agreement on joint incident prevention and response mechanisms in the Abkhaz-Georgian and South Ossetian-Georgian border areas. Support was expressed for the regular activities of the incident prevention and response mechanisms on the border between Abkhazia and Georgia. It was noted that the recent report of Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg on the monitoring of investigations into cases of missing persons in the territory of Georgia and South Ossetia is helpful towards an early resumption of the regular work of the mechanisms on the border of these two states.

In an effort to strengthen regional stability and security, and acting in good faith, the Russian side announced its decision in the coming days to withdraw the Russian border post from the disputed area of Perevi village on the western border of South Ossetia and Georgia to deep into South Ossetia. The co-chairs of the Geneva discussions gave a positive assessment of the responsible stance of Russia on this issue.

The chief issue of the Geneva discussions — of Georgia's commitments not to use force against South Ossetia and Abkhazia — continued to be discussed. The delegations of Abkhazia and South Ossetia again noted the futility of further work on other issues of the agenda without addressing this problem. The reaction of the representatives of Tbilisi showed that the current Georgian authorities are still not ready for substantive and constructive dialogue on this major problem. The Russian side expressed support for the revitalization of the activity of the security group to find an acceptable solution.

The South Ossetian delegation refused to continue discussing the problems of refugees and displaced persons within the humanitarian group following the adoption by the General Assembly on 7 September 2010 of the Georgian draft resolution on the status of refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and suggested

that the debate on the subject of refugees be transferred to the General Assembly and its committees. At the same time, the representatives of Tskhinval expressed the readiness to arrange the return of refugees, including those from Georgia, to the Leningorsk district of South Ossetia and to provide them with South Ossetian documents to facilitate the swift resolution of social problems.

The co-chairs of the humanitarian group suggested a phased approach consisting of initial joint fact-finding regarding the number and categories of refugees and displaced persons existing in the territories of Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia. The Russian and Abkhaz delegations, having essentially shared the South Ossetian démarche on the counterproductive effect of the Georgian draft resolution on refugees for the continuation of this work in Geneva, generally supported the concept of a phased approach. At the same time, they noted the paramount need to create safe conditions for the return of refugees, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the humanitarian situation in Transcaucasia. It is also important to consider that any decisions taken at the Geneva discussions are by consensus. It is therefore necessary to continue to work in a manner that is acceptable to all participants. The Russian side expressed its readiness to render any assistance to the Abkhaz, Georgian and South Ossetian delegations on the subject of refugees and displaced persons.

Prior to the meeting in Geneva, experts from the secretariats of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe had organized two information sessions on the practice of exchanging information and establishing contact between parties in conflict (as illustrated by the Cyprus problem) and on solving property rights issues (as illustrated by Bosnia and Herzegovina). All participants acknowledged the usefulness of such additional information briefings. With regard to the Geneva discussions, the problem of applying international practices comes to the fore, taking into account the whole complex set of current developments in Transcaucasia, including the enlargement in 2008 of the range of independent states in the region.

The next meeting in Geneva is scheduled for 16 December 2010.

Annex II to the letter dated 21 October 2010 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Withdrawal of the Russian border post from Perevi village on the border between Georgia and the Republic of South Ossetia

19 October 2010

Acting in a spirit of goodwill, the Russian side has relocated to deep into South Ossetia the border post that was for two years in disputed territory near the village of Perevi (western border of South Ossetia with Georgia).

This was preceded by serious preparation. Under the auspices of Russia's Federal Security Border Service, a bypass road over 10 kms in length had been built in difficult mountain terrain to connect the Karzmanskoye Gorge to the rest of South Ossetia. It is important in supplying the local Ossetian population.

The main relocation parameters of our border guards had been preliminarily discussed with the leadership of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia. We had confirmed that we were intending to lift from the agenda this technical problem, repeatedly raised lately by our western partners, subject to the provision by the European Union Mission of clear security guarantees from the Georgian side of the border, and to the conduct by the Mission leadership of the relevant "educational" work with Tbilisi in order to prevent any possible provocations. It was important to avoid a repetition of the events of December 2008, when the first attempt at a voluntary withdrawal of the Russian post had already been made, but had failed because, after the pullout of Russian troops, Perevi was immediately occupied by a large force of Georgian Interior Ministry special forces, and Georgia's propaganda presented the matter as its "big victory". Then, a real threat arose for the South Ossetians living in the Karzmanskoye Gorge, and our border guards were forced to return to Perevi.

The necessary assurances from the European Union Mission had been given to us. The withdrawal of the Russian border post was performed this time in the presence of European Union observers. There was no interference from a small unit of Georgian police. Observers of the European Union Mission will monitor the situation in Perevi for at least a few weeks until the situation has fully stabilized in the area.

We hope that this move of the Russian side, aimed at reducing tensions on the borders of Georgia and South Ossetia, will receive an adequate and constructive response from the Georgian side and the international community.

With the withdrawal of the Russian border post from Perevi, the issue of alleged non-compliance by us with the Medvedev-Sarkozy agreement has been definitely closed. The borders of the Republic of South Ossetia and the Republic of Abkhazia are securely protected by Russian border guards on the basis of the bilateral agreements of 30 April 2009 with these states.